

DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

CONTACT: OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
(916) 657-7202
(800) 735-2929 (TT/TDD)
(800) 735-2922 (Voice)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 2, 1997

NEW MILESTONES REACHED IN MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

1996 was another record year for motorcycle safety in California, according to the California Highway Patrol (CHP). The good news was released at the start of Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month in California. “We continue to be encouraged by the incredible progress being made on the motorcycle safety front here in California,” stated CHP Commissioner Dwight O. Helmick. “And a great deal of the credit should go to the California Motorcyclist Safety Program (CMSP).”

The legislatively-mandated motorcycle training and awareness program, overseen by the CHP, has reached several important milestones. It is celebrating its tenth year of public operation, has trained over 100,000 students and has released a landmark study of training effectiveness showing that, initially, trained novice motorcycle riders are involved in collisions at half the rate of their untrained counterparts.

Statistics released for 1996 show that 232 motorcyclists were killed and 7,860 were injured in California, in comparison to the 851 fatalities and 28,097 injuries occurring in 1986, the year prior to the establishment of the CMSP. That represents a 73 percent drop in the annual number of fatalities and a 72 percent drop in the number of injuries between 1986 and 1996. Last year motorcyclist deaths were the lowest in California since 1963, and injuries were the lowest since those statistics were first tracked in 1972. “Statistics are sometimes hard to interpret,” Commissioner Helmick said, “but these numbers tell us the plain and simple fact that California motorcycle riding is the safest it has ever been in the modern era.”

- M O R E -

2-2-2-2-2

Governor Wilson has proclaimed May as California's Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month. The month will be celebrated by a variety of special events held by motorcycle enthusiast groups.

The CMSP offers both Basic and Experienced Rider Courses throughout the state. The Basic Rider Course is required for those under 21 seeking to obtain a motorcycle license. California motorcycle riders can get information on the location of the nearest training course by calling 1-800-CC-RIDER (1-800-227-4337).

#####